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HELP AVERT A HOLIDAY-SEASON BLOOD SHORTAGE

Use of Pledge Cards With Vacation Addresses to Keep College
Donors In the Blood Donor Pool Over Academic Vacation Periods

by

David Eisenman
John Hackmann

Blood Donor Research Group
105 Advanced Computation Building
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801

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April 30, 1976

ABSTRACT

We believe that we have demonstrated the utility and effectiveness of pledge cards on a statewide basis to extend the participation of college blood donors, both student and staff, into academic vacation periods. This substantially increases the attractiveness of campuses as blood sources.

However, the technique is likely to be effective only if the blood program already stresses multiple donation, provides donors with frequent opportunities for donation, and has educated donors about the three-week expiration period for blood, the possibility of giving as many as six pints per year per donor, and the importance of meeting increased holiday blood demand with efforts to maintain, even to increase, donations in these periods.

Sample pledge cards and posters and How-to-do-it section are included.

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2 States Are Out of Blood

Boston

The Red Cross in Massachusetts and Utah reported yesterday that the two states were out of blood.

In Massachusetts, 130 of 172 hospitals had no blood on hand and "They're in a state of panic." A Red Cross spokesman said.

In Utah, the spokesman said, "If there was a plane or bus accident, there would be just nothing we can do" to provide blood.

Blood banks in many other areas reported they were experiencing some shortage, which many described as seasonal. The supply frequently dips in the summer, vacation, and during long when regular donors are on holiday periods.

Still other cities -- including San Francisco -- reported their supply of blood was adequate.

Margie Gandoli, a Red Cross official in Massachusetts said: "Anything collected is going right out, so the crisis is still at hand. The problem is meeting emergency needs."

It would take three weeks of 500 donations a day to reach normal levels, she said.

In Utah, the center was out of blood through the weekend but there was no emergency appeal for donors.

Certainly there's a short-

age," said Isabelle Brockman at the blood bank of General Hospital at Louisville, Ky. "There always is. One day this week we had no whole blood. We ask the doctors not to order it unless absolutely necessary."

In Seattle and Portland, Ore., officials reported an increase in the amount of open heart surgery taxed the supply of blood.

"The need for blood is constantly increasing," said Red Cross Pacific Northwest Blood Program administrator Paul Steube in Portland. Increased population should not affect demand, he said. But rather medicine is discovering more uses of blood and blood products.

Steube and Marian Halliday, supervisor of the King county (Seattle) blood bank, both cited open heart surgery, which Steube said requires 11 pints for each case.

Jim Holland, director of the Community Blood Bank of Central Iowa at Des Moines, said he had only 16 units of A-positive blood Thursday and was short of O-positive and A-negative earlier in the week.

"When those problems occurred here, I called the community blood bank in Kansas City which had the exact same problem in the

exact same blood types," Holland said.

At Nashville, Jerry Gowen at General Hospital said "We're down to about half our stock" and one serious injury could wipe out the entire supply.

EXPERIENCE OF THE VOLUNTEER ILLINI PROJECTS BLOOD PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN CAMPUS

I. BACKGROUND

One reason college campuses play a smaller role in meeting America's need for blood than one might expect is that students are off-campus precisely in the seasons most likely to be characterized by blood shortages. Most metropolitan areas and many other regions find the Christmas/New Year period and the mid-summer period the worst times for donor response.

Newspaper stories and announcements of shortages on radio and television during holiday periods are probably familiar to you; a few examples appear in this document. During holidays, people are outside their normal routine of work and school, and have many concerns -- somehow blood donation just seems to become a lower priority. At the same time, accidents may increase the need for blood.

II. UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS PROGRAM

Timing of donations was already a major concern of ours when we embarked upon an expanded blood program at the University of Illinois Urbana campus in the fall of 1972. Instead of large infrequent "blood drives," our program emphasized regular monthly collections. These made inventory control easier for the blood agencies and increased the number of donation opportunities for each donor during the academic year.

Although such a program requires considerably more organization and volunteer effort than the more common semi-annual "blood drive" seen on many campuses, we have found the extra effort amply rewarded. In the first year of the program more blood was collected than the total collected in the previous five years. Yet at no time did either of the participating blood agencies experience an oversupply or an increased outdating rate.

However, it bothered us that our on-campus efforts were of no direct help in meeting Illinois' recurrent winter and summer seasonal blood shortages. Consequently, we devised several specialized recruitment efforts to compensate for our inability to schedule campus blood collections in these two troublesome seasons.

- o First, in 1972 we sent a letter timed to arrive during the Christmas season to the parents of all students, alerting them to the need for increased volunteer blood donations (Illinois had just passed its "Blood Labeling Act" and needed to increase volunteer donations by 50%, from about 200,000 pints per year to 300,000 pints per year).
- o Second, also in December 1972, we sent a letter to all faculty and nonacademic staff of the University pointing out that blood was in especially short supply just when the students were not on campus. They were invited to fill out and return pledge slips indicating that they would be willing to give blood over the vacation period if called.

III. FACULTY/STAFF PLEDGE CARDS FOR HOLIDAY SEASONS

Each Christmas and summer since 1972, a semi-annual letter of this sort to faculty and staff has produced from 300 to 500 pledges. (Copies of several of these letters are enclosed.) The Champaign County Blood Bank, a fixed facility community blood bank, has made increasingly intensive use of these pledges and has completely averted shortages during these seasons. For example, in the summer 1975, University donors provided about 25% of the Champaign-Urbana blood supply.

The Faculty/Staff pledge project, then, effectively compensates, at least in the University town, for the seasonal decline in student donors.* The regional Red Cross Blood Center stages mobiles on campus during the semesters, scheduling early-December, Mid-January drawings to bracket the winter holidays and scheduling similarly to bracket the summer in order to benefit from student donations in these seasons, building up their inventories before vacations and replenishing them afterwards.

**GIVE AS WELL AS
RECEIVE THIS
YEAR!**



**DONATE
BLOOD!**

* It has also helped the bank enlarge its permanent (resident) donor file; over 1200 faculty/staff (of a total population of approximately 9000 faculty/staff) are active blood donors, comprising about 20% of all donors in the Champaign blood bank file. More than 100 new donors, not previously in that file, filled out summer 1975 pledges; the pledge project helps integrate newly arrived faculty and staff into the blood donating population of this community.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS · 107 COBLE HALL · CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820

December 5, 1975

To: All Academic and Non-Academic Staff

From: David Eisenman, Staff Associate
Advisor to the VIP Blood Program 333-4975



Enclosed is your RED CROSS Blood Assurance card for this year. See the reverse side of this note for a more complete explanation of blood assurance than appears on the card.

A PARTICULARLY CRITICAL SEASON FOR THE ILLINOIS BLOOD SUPPLY IS ABOUT TO BEGIN

From roughly Christmas week through January, hospitals all over the country experience shortages of blood. Sickness and accidents go up. Blood donations go down. Consequently, surgery is postponed and sometimes emergency patients suffer unnecessarily from lack of blood or blood components.

Last Christmas/New Years roughly 350 University staff responded to a letter like this one. The Champaign County Blood Bank called in a very high fraction of that number, and Champaign suffered no blood shortage.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED AGAIN THIS YEAR. Blood use in this community has gone up substantially since last year. If you are willing and able to give blood over the semester break, please fill out the coupon below and return it, indicating the period(s) in which you will be available.

NOTE: A number of local church congregations have begun blood programs with the Champaign County Blood Bank. If your church is participating, simply ask that your pint be credited to your church's program, even if you are called in through the University program. All donation programs are coordinated and are committed to mutual support.

Volunteer Illini Projects Blood Program, 328 Illini Union

- ☐ YES. I'll give a pint in Champaign if called over the holiday.
☐ I've given blood at the Champaign County Blood Bank before.

Name: _____ Blood Type (if known): _____ Rh _____

Home Address: _____ Home Phone: _____

Campus Address: _____ Campus Phone: _____

Date of Last Donation (if known): _____

Are you going to be out of town during the vacation? From: _____ To: _____

(SEE OTHER SIDE)

WHAT IS BLOOD ASSURANCE?

The three most serious problems facing the blood transfusion service in the United States are:

- o AVAILABILITY: Blood of all needed types is not always available in sufficient amounts when and where it is needed.
- o QUALITY: Sometimes, even when blood of the proper types is available, it has been supplied by paid donors who are much more likely to be carriers of serious or even fatal diseases transmitted through transfusion than volunteer donors. (In Illinois, blood used in transfusions must be labeled as to source.)
- o COST: To increase the supply of voluntarily-donated blood, many hospitals require transfused patients to recruit sufficient donors to replace blood they have received or pay a monetary "replacement fee" for each unit of blood not replaced.

BLOOD ASSURANCE deals only with this third problem. After a transfused patient is released from the hospital, membership in a blood assurance program will relieve him of any obligation to recruit replacement donors or to pay non-replacement fees.

Blood assurance benefits are available to individuals who have themselves given blood or who are members of groups which, collectively, have donated significant amounts of blood. It is only right to free such individuals from obligations to replace or pay fees in lieu of blood, since they have acted to contribute voluntarily to the available blood supply.

Thus, blood assurance is primarily an economic benefit for those covered: if blood was found for them when they needed it, at least they won't have to pay for it or find donors to replace what they have used.

HOWEVER, NO PERSON OR ORGANIZATION CAN GUARANTEE THAT VOLUNTARILY-DONATED BLOOD WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ANY PERSON WHENEVER AND WHEREVER IT IS NEEDED.

All hospitals and blood service organizations are ethically bound to do their best to find blood for EVERY patient, whether or not a member of a blood assurance program. Their ability to provide voluntarily-donated blood for any patient depends solely and entirely on whether enough people have given blood voluntarily in advance of that patient's need. Hospitals and blood banks routinely exchange blood and assist one another in responding to emergency situations. But they can only share what has already been donated. IF NOBODY GIVES, NOBODY GETS.

Most healthy people between the ages of 17 and 65 who weight more than 110 pounds can give blood as often as SIX TIMES A YEAR, with a minimum of eight weeks between donations. The Champaign County Blood Bank will be happy to answer questions about the eligibility of any prospective donor. Their phone number is 367-2202.

THE BIG QUESTION - WHETHER THERE WILL BE BLOOD AVAILABLE IF YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY NEEDS IT - CAN ONLY BE ANSWERED BY YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBORS GIVING BLOOD REGULARLY AS OFTEN AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN.

IV. EXTENDING PLEDGE CARDS TO STUDENTS

Aware that a high proportion of our students are from the Chicago metropolitan area which seems to experience severe seasonal shortages, we decided to extend the pledge-card concept to our student donors, urging them to give blood at home over vacation, in addition to their on-campus donations.

Pledge cards for the Christmas vacation were distributed for the first time to students who gave blood at the October, 1974, on-campus blood-mobile. Since they would next be eligible to give blood (eight weeks are required between donations) just as the semester ended and after the last on-campus collection, they were all candidates for donation at home over the vacation. "Help Avert a Christmas Blood Shortage" was the message at the top of the flyer they were given; at the bottom was the pledge slip.

The return rate exceeded 40% from these October donors. Additional pledges were obtained from donors whose last pint had been given in August or September. They were reached through direct mail to our donor file and through newspaper and newsletter notices. However the return rate from these channels was low compared to that obtained by approaching donors who were giving blood in October, at the bloodmobile.

Approximately 500 pledges were distributed to Chicago and down-state blood agencies at Christmas, 1974 and again at Christmas, 1975. The Chicago pledges were sorted and distributed according to location (the pledge reads that the card will be sent to the blood agency nearest the student's vacation address) by the Metropolitan Chicago Blood Council, now the Chicago Regional Blood Program.

Other pledges were sent to community blood banks and Red Cross regional blood centers, in the course of which it was discovered that there existed no agreed-upon regionalization of blood collection in Illinois; often it was hard to determine which agency should receive pledges from a particular community or sub-community.

The banks reported an extremely high response rate when these donors were called.

The pledge project was repeated for summer, 1975, this time relying even more heavily on direct mail to student donors. (A copy of the pledge card is attached.) Again, about 500 pledges were returned (from a donor population estimated at 4,000). For summer 1976, the U of I produced about 1200 pledges.

Many students do not return pledges because they know that their community is served by bloodmobiles rather than a fixed-facility drawing station which calls donors and makes appointments. Others know where their nearest blood agency is, and are prepared to make appointments themselves, not wishing to wait until called. Thus many more donors besides those responding to pledge cards may become vacation donors in their home communities.

V. THREE FUNCTIONS: EDUCATION, DONATIONS, AND EMERGENCY RESERVE

We believe that the importance of the project extends considerably beyond the immediate yield of pints. The project has served to alert all donors to several key facts about the American blood situation.

First, it reminds donors that they can give more frequently than is commonly realized -- up to six pints per year. Most donors have never been told how often they can give! This information will help donors stop viewing blood donation as an unusual activity, to be considered once or twice a year.

Second, they are reminded that blood cannot usually be stored for more than three weeks and therefore is always in demand. Again, most donors do not know this fact, which is key to the constant need for blood!

Third, the seasonality of blood shortages is called to their attention. This understanding of the special demands of holiday periods stimulates many to donate precisely at the needed time.

We hope that these efforts will help our program turn out college graduates who not only remain blood donors throughout their lives but give frequently and do not slack off during the holiday seasons. We hope they will even make extra efforts to give blood at those seasons.

In numbers of pints, the effectiveness of the program will depend on the number of pledge cards filled out, returned, and distributed to blood banks. If many blood banks and hospital blood banks receive cards, it may be hard to get an accurate tally of pints actually drawn. Use of the cards will depend on the needs of the blood bank, their resources available for phone calling, etc.

Just having the cards on hand is a value in itself, for it means the blood banks will have a backup to their own files in the event of an emergency. Several banks wrote us mentioning this aspect.

For the Christmas season in 1975, 1200 pledges were collected statewide; for summer of 1976, campuses in Illinois produced 4200 pledges from students.

HOW TO INITIATE A PLEDGE CARD PROJECT

We will be happy to talk with you to help you establish your pledge card project. Here are the basic steps:

1. Determine if holiday blood shortages tend to occur in your region -- especially in the larger cities. If so, contact your blood bank recruiter and ask if there is already a mechanism for handling pledges for Christmas/New Year or summer period blood donations.
2. Since most campuses draw their student body from a city-wide or state-wide area that may include more than one drawing agency, it will be necessary to discuss with the various agencies a method of sharing the cards that will be generated.
3. The person or group that coordinates the project should contact the various campus representatives to suggest the project and gain their cooperation. Usually these contacts can be made through the drawing agencies.
4. A pledge card must be designed; feel free to copy anything in this book that is useful.
5. Posters for the canteen area should be prepared to stress the important points: you can donate every eight weeks, blood lasts three weeks, the worst blood needs are summer and winter holidays, etc.
6. It will be necessary to print these posters and cards; a participating blood bank may help you with this.
7. Blank cards will have to be sent to campuses and returned; United Parcel, the bus lines, and parcel post are all useful.
8. At the mobiles on the large campuses you may wish to be present to make sure the volunteers get started right collecting cards; each volunteer will do the best job if he or she understands the scope of the project and its purpose.
9. The collected cards must be sorted and distributed to the various blood banks and hospitals.
10. The blood banks should return the cards indicating how many donors gave, so you can publicize and evaluate the project.

PLEDGE CARD DESIGN

(A card handed out and collected in the canteen area of the blood drive)
Only one side of the card needs be printed if the cards are to be collected at a blood drive.

This information is
essential

Encouraging a sense
of commitment

So the donor is not
called too soon

YES. I'LL GIVE A PINT AT HOME OVER THE SUMMER
IF MY LOCAL BLOOD AGENCY NEEDS ME AND CALLS.

NAME: _____ BLOOD TYPE: _____
(if known)

SUMMER
PHONE NO.: _____ DATE OF LAST DONATION _____
(approx)

SUMMER
ADDRESS: _____
Street City State Zip

COUNTY: _____ (HELPS US LOCATE NEAREST BLOOD BANK)

NEAREST BLOOD BANK (IF KNOWN): _____

DATES YOU'LL BE THERE: FROM: _____ TO: _____

BLOOD IS A LIVING TISSUE. IT CAN BE KEPT ONLY THREE WEEKS.
THAT IS WHY BLOOD IS NEEDED EVERY WEEK, ALL YEAR.
GIVE OVER THE SUMMER, WHEN DONORS ARE ESPECIALLY HARD TO
FIND. THANK YOU.

© Blood Donor Research Group
University of Illinois

This is needed as the blood bank
may send a notice out by mail

Basic educational information --
it can't hurt to say it often

The cards should be on card stock so they can be handled and sorted.
If the card is small enough to fit in a standard business envelope, i.e.,
less than 3 7/8" tall, it can be mailed easily to drawing agencies, and
if desired, mailed back.

(For cards to be returned in the mail.)

If donors take the cards home from the drive, for roommates or to wait till they know where they will be, you will want to have a mailing address printed on the reverse. You may want to have business reply printed on the back or a message suggesting the use of 'campus mail,' if your college offers such a service. Most campuses will have a business reply permit that they may let you use.

This design would be suitable for cards mailed to donors in envelopes, with donor cards for examples, or handed out or hand stuffed in dormitory or departmental mailboxes.

Be sure your budget can afford business reply! The cost now is 18¢ per card (13¢ postage plus 5¢ handling).

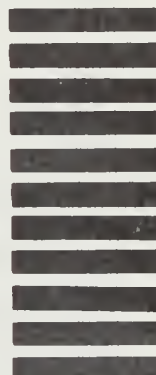
FIRST CLASS
PERMIT NO. 355
URBANA, ILL.
61801

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY

Blood Donor Research Group
Advanced Computation Building
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801



**HELP AVERT A SUMMER BLOOD
SHORTAGE**

Blood is often in short supply during the vacation months.

Students on Illinois campuses are being asked to fill out this card. If enough of us pledge and donate over the summer, we can help ELIMINATE SUMMER BLOOD SHORTAGES in Illinois. Last year our efforts helped hundreds of blood recipients.

Fill out this card. Remember, never wait to give blood - if it is needed and you are able please give at every opportunity. We'll forward it to the blood agency or agencies nearest your vacation address.

USE
CAMPUS
MAIL
PLEASE

Volunteer Illini Projects,
Incorporated
328 Illini Union North
Urbana, Illinois 61801

GIVE A GIFT THIS



WORLD DAY S EASON

THAT'S REALLY NEEDED

DONATE BLOOD

TODAY!!

PLEDGE CARD DESIGN

(Double Post Cards)

If a mailing to donors does not include other material, such as a donor newsletter, announcement of the next blood drive, or a blood donor card, you may want to mail to donors a double postcard that includes a pledge card.

Also, you may want donors who are not sure of their summer plans to fill out only side 1A of the pledge card, and you can then bulk mail (200 cards minimum) the double postcards to donors late in the year and they can tear off half the card and return it. A typical poster that could be used to explain this is enclosed.

Dear Student Blood Donor,
Here is the summer pledge card that you requested.

PLEASE FILL OUT YOUR PLEDGE CARD AND RETURN IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

We will see that your pledge gets to the drawing agency nearest your summer address. If they need you, they will call you.

Illinois has been repeatedly threatened by blood shortages during the summer months.

Donors are frequently out of touch with their regular blood drawing agency. This is especially so with students, since your home may be far from campus where you regularly give.

Your pledge card keeps you in touch when your pint is most needed.

REMEMBER: Give as often as you can, especially during winter and summer vacations!

Cut Along Dotted Line

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
NO POSTAGE STAMP NECESSARY IF MAILED IN THE UNITED STATES

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY

Blood Donor Research Group
Advanced Computation Building
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801

FIRST CLASS
PERMIT NO. 355
URBANA, ILL.
61801



Side 1: (Fill out if your summer plans are not definite yet.)

CAMPUS ADDRESS:

NAME:

Blood Donor Research Group
Advanced Computation Building
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801
(217) 333-4975

YES. I'LL GIVE A PINT AT HOME OVER THE SUMMER
IF MY LOCAL BLOOD AGENCY NEEDS ME AND CALLS.

NAME:

BLOOD TYPE:

(if known)

SUMMER

PHONE NO.:

DATE OF LAST DONATION

SUMMER

ADDRESS:

(approx)

Street

COUNTY:

City

State

Zip

NEAREST BLOOD BANK (IF KNOWN): (HELPS US LOCATE NEAREST BLOOD BANK)

DATES YOU'LL BE THERE: FROM:

TO:

BLOOD IS A LIVING TISSUE. IT CAN BE KEPT ONLY THREE WEEKS.
THAT IS WHY BLOOD IS NEEDED EVERY WEEK, ALL YEAR.
GIVE OVER THE SUMMER, WHEN DONORS ARE ESPECIALLY HARD TO
FIND. THANK YOU.

COLLECTING CARDS FROM DONORS

Pledge cards can be collected several ways. It is probably wise to restrict card distribution to students who have given blood, since the return rate from a general distribution probably will be very low.

A. At Campus Bloodmobiles

It is highly effective to give out pledge cards at a bloodmobile on campus. Donors can read the materials, educate themselves about the importance of vacation period donation, and fill out the pledge while they are waiting at the various stations (temperatures, blood pressure, etc.).

Perhaps the most effective point at which to distribute the cards is the temperature station. If they are given out earlier, they interfere with the normal flow of donors, causing bottlenecks. But in the temperature station, the donor must spend a few minutes sitting quietly anyway.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT A CARD BE HANDED TO EVERY DONOR. If the cards are simply left lying on a table, with a sign, only a few donors will get up from their chairs and pick up a card.

Cards can be collected at the same station they are distributed. Or you can collect them in the canteen while donors wait the required fifteen minutes.

ALTHOUGH THE CANTEEN MAY APPEAR TO BE THE BEST PLACE TO GIVE OUT CARDS, IT OFTEN IS NOT. Canteen workers are too busy keeping track of donors' needs to handle this additional task.

B. Direct Mail

An extremely effective means for communicating with donors is direct mail. If you can maintain a mailing list, you can send campus-mail notices of upcoming bloodmobiles very cheaply.

Pledge cards distributed to all known donors on campus, via campus mail and bulk-rate U.S. mail (for those living off-campus) will bring in a reasonable response. Remember: many donors give fewer pints during the academic year than they would like because bloodmobiles happen to come when they have colds, or exams, or are otherwise unable to give. They will be all the more willing to sign up to give over the vacation periods.

Keeping up an accurate mailing list of all donors is a time-consuming task, but it is also one which leads to effective programs. If you are interested in keeping a mailing list of blood donors, write us at the Blood Donor Research Group and we can help you plan it, estimate costs, etc.

DISTRIBUTING CARDS TO BLOOD BANKS

Once you decide to collect pledge cards from your student donors, you will need a method for distributing the cards to blood agencies in the region served by your college. There may be an association of blood agencies in your State or city. If so, contact them and determine if they will agree to accept your cards and forward them to the agencies nearest each student.

If your college serves an entire State or larger geographical region, you may have to perform a preliminary sort yourself. ZIP codes and counties are helpful in putting cards into some order.

Clearly, the project is most effective if pledges are being collected on several campuses. Then you are likely to get at least a few pledges for even the smallest blood agency in your region.

Your blood program may be able to persuade the blood agency or agencies with which you work to help spread the pledge card idea to other campuses; in Illinois, 22 campuses are participating.

If all the college blood programs in an entire State are distributing pledges, the total return will be quite useful to all the blood agencies in that State.

But don't be discouraged if you are not able to get all campuses or all blood agencies interested in the idea the first year you try it. You will find that when you collect cards only on your own campus, the agencies receiving them -- even those getting only four or five cards -- will be grateful for the help you bring them at the worst time of the year. They in turn may help you collect them on their campuses the following year.

The University of Illinois program succeeded in getting pledge cards distributed at other colleges only in its third year! But even the first year, blood agencies in remote areas of Illinois wrote letters to the Urbana program thanking them profusely for their thoughtfulness in helping keep donors and agencies in touch with each other.

WILL PLEDGE CARDS REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD DRAWN AT CAMPUS DRIVES?

We are currently engaged in research determining whether pledge cards might tend to reduce on-campus donations under some circumstances. This research has grown out of concerns raised by blood agencies and campus groups at other universities, especially with regard to the relatively short Christmas vacation.

While we have stressed throughout our program that frequent donation is desirable and allows the donor to make the maximum contribution to the Illinois blood supply, other campuses which still maintain the pattern of semi-annual "blood drives" may find that some donors stay away from fall and spring drives if they think blood is "needed more" at Christmas or in mid-summer. It is possible that pledge card distribution for vacation donations could actually reduce total blood donation and disrupt orderly scheduling -- the diametric opposite of what is intended.

If publicity stresses a few key points about blood and helps make them part of the general awareness people have about blood donation, we do not feel that there will be any problem.

Donors should know:

- o Never put off donating blood -- give every time you are able and eligible.
- o Shortages are frequent during winter and summer holiday periods.
- o Give blood to any agency that needs blood.
- o Blood lasts only three weeks.
- o You can give six times a year.

HOW TO GIVE FACULTY AND STAFF AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP

At the Urbana campus of the University of Illinois, we send a letter to all faculty and non-academic staff twice a year. The first goes out in early December, the second in mid-May.

Both letters explain that the local blood bank needs blood all year around, but students are away during the vacation periods. Therefore, faculty and staff donations are especially helpful at those times.

The letter contains a pledge slip which can be filled out and returned through campus mail.

Typically, 350 to 450 responses are received from a mailing to about 9000 faculty and staff. We know that between 1200 and 1400 faculty and staff are blood donors. Many may not fill out pledges because they, too, will be away over the vacation, because they have recently given blood, or because they know the blood bank calls them frequently anyway.

It is worthy of note that between 100 and 150 of the pledges received after each mailing are from individuals who have not previously given blood to the local blood agency.

Some are new on campus; others are returning to blood donation, or beginning to give blood, after years of non-donation.

The pledge project, then, serves two very important functions:

- o it alerts the blood agency to donors who are going to be in town and are stating their readiness to come when called
- o It helps identify new donors who can be called not only for the vacation but can be entered in the bank's permanent files for contact at other times of the year as well.

Our observation is that the blood bank staff begin using our pledges as soon as they are delivered, and prefer to call our faculty and staff to calling people in their permanent files. The reason is simple: these are people who are expecting a call and have already indicated a willingness to give blood in this season.

The bank has been most enthusiastic about this part of our arrangement with them. It is the most successful division of the U of I blood program.

SUMMARY

We have found pledge cards effective in extending the participation of college blood donors to the whole calendar year. This substantially increases the attractiveness of campuses as blood sources. However, the technique may be effective only where a blood program already stresses multiple donation, provides donors with frequent opportunities for donation, and has educated donors about the three-week expiration period for blood, the possibility of giving as many as six pints per year per donor, and the importance of meeting increased holiday blood demand with efforts to maintain, even increase, donations in these periods.

The Blood Donor Research Group is very interested in pledge card projects nationally and will provide advice and materials to support your efforts within our resources.

Good luck!

THANK-YOU FOR GIVING BLOOD

IS IT TOO EARLY TO START THINKING ABOUT SUMMER PLANS?

No! Start now by arranging to give blood over the summer vacation, when blood is often in short supply.

THE PROBLEM: In summer, donors are frequently out of contact with their regular blood drawing agency. For students this is especially so since home may be far from campus where you usually give.

But the need for blood remains constant, or even increases, with holiday traffic accidents.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: You will find pledge cards in the canteen of today's blood drive.

If your summer plans are not clear now, fill out side one of the pledge card. In late April or early May, when you'll have a better idea of your summer plans, we'll mail you a pledge card. When you return it, we will forward it to the blood agency nearest your summer address.

If you are certain of your summer plans now, fill out side two of the pledge card. If you are filling this out in January, February, or March, please do not fill in the date of your last donation since you will probably give again before summer. We will send your pledge on to the drawing agency nearest your summer address.

You will be called by that blood agency if they need your blood type or if they are going to have a bloodmobile near you.

REMEMBER: YOU CAN GIVE UP TO SIX PINTS OF BLOOD EACH YEAR. Blood is needed in ALL seasons.* Don't get out of touch in the summer or over the winter vacation: these are the times when supply and demand are often most out of line.

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More About the Pledge Card Project (for the curious)

A number of Illinois campuses have excellent term-time blood programs. But it seems a shame that campus programs operate at a minimum during just those seasons when blood banks have the worst time finding donors -- summer and winter holiday seasons.

Pilot programs over the past three years have delivered several thousand pledge cards to blood banks from student and faculty/staff donors. This year a number of campus blood programs are working together on a unified approach to vacation-period pledges.

Illinois needs about 350,000 pints of blood a year. Students are meeting a significant part of that need. Your participation in the pledge card project helps keep us active year-around -- not just when classes are meeting.

* Usually, blood can be kept only three weeks after it is given. So donations are needed EVERY WEEK, ALL YEAR.

THANK-YOU
FOR
GIVING BLOOD

IS IT TOO EARLY TO START THINKING ABOUT SUMMER PLANS?

No! Start now by arranging to give blood over the summer vacation, when blood is often in short supply.

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But the need for blood remains constant, or even increases, with holiday traffic accidents.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: You will find pledge cards in the canteen of today's blood drive.

Fill out a card and return it as directed. We will forward it to the agency or agencies nearest your summer address.

You will be called by that blood agency if they need your blood type or if they are going to have a bloodmobile near you.

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